The promised presence of Christ with his People a source of Consolation under the most painful Bereavements.

A

SERMON

Delivered

AT THE BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE, CANNON-STREET,

BIRMINGHAM,

On Lord's-Day Evening, October 20, 1799;

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

The Rev. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

Late Pastor of the Church assembling there,

Who died October 10, in the Thirty-fourth year of his Age.

BY JOHN RYLAND, D. D.

To which is Prefixed

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED AT THE GRAVE, OCTOBER 16, 1799,

BY THE REV. J. BREWER.

Second Edition.

The profits arising from the sale of this publication will be appropriated to the benefit of
MR. PEARCE'S WIDOW AND FIVE SMALL CHILDREN.

5

=CLIPSTONE=
Printed at the Office of J. W. Morris:
SOLD BY
BUTTON, London; JAMES, Bristol; and BELCHER, Birmingham.
Price One Shilling.
1800

THE

SUBSTANCE OF AN

ORATION

Delivered at the Grave

OF

The Rev. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

WE are called together to day upon a moſt ſolemn and affecting occaſion. Our buſineſs here is, to convey the precious remains of a dear departed brother to his long home, to the houſe appointed for all living. The ſubject of our preſent contemplation is of no ordinary kind; it is that which ought to come home to every man's boſom, becauſe it is that in which we are all intereſted. It is not like many other ſubjects, which while ſome are materially affected by them, to others they are articles of total indifferency: but death ſpeaks in an imperious tone, and demands the attention of all.

DEATH! ſolemn ſound! the bare annunciation of which, ſhould arreſt the mind of every individual in this numerous aſſembly. Where is the man that liveth and ſhall not ſee death? When Xerxes viewed his incalculable army, it is ſaid, he wept, from the conſideration that in a

few years, not one of that prodigious hoſt would be living. Whether the Perſian really wept, or not, I am not ſure; but when I conſider, that in a few, comparatively a very few years, not one of all whom I am now addreſſing but muſt be laid as low as the breathleſs corpſe of our dear departed brother, I feel my mind deeply affected. And, O that I could but awaken a due concern in every boſom about this truly momentous ſubject!

Thus ſtands the irrevocable decree of the immutable God—IT IS APPOINTED UNTO ALL MEN ONCE TO DIE. The wiſe and unwiſe, the patrician and plebean, the monarch and the beggar, muſt ſubmit alike, to the ſtrong arm of this univerſal conqueror, the king of terrors. A conſideration like this, ſhould ſink deep into every man's heart; but alas! man is a ſtrange being, loath to learn what moſt intimately belongs to him. The moſt awful things loſe their effect by their frequency; and hence it is, that the death of a fellow-creature is, in general, no more regarded than "the fall of an autumnal leaf in the pathleſs deſart." Wretched apathy! Fatal inſenſibility!

Let us for a moment meditate upon the effects ſubſequent to the triumph of the laſt enemy. What melancholy ravages does he make, even in this world! He cauſes the faireſt flower to wither,

often in the morning; he ſtains the pride of all ſublunary glory; and caſts the nobleſt work of God into the duſt. When he takes to himſelf his great power, none can ſtay his hand. Fixed in his purpoſe, and irreſiſtible in the execution of the ſame, he ſtalks, untouched by the pangs of agonizing nature, the diſtreſs of helpleſs infancy; the poignant grief of paternal affection; or the bittereſt ſorrows of connubial love. Relentleſsly he breaks in upon domeſtic happineſs; fruſtrates the moſt benevolent deſigns; and caſts a dark ſhade upon the brighteſt proſpects. In fine, cruelty marks his footſteps; and deſolation and anguiſh are his common attendants.

If we look beyond the ſcene which preſents itſelf to our view in this life; and by the aid of revelation, endeavour to ſubſtantiate the ſerious realities of death, beyond "that bourne from whence no traveller returns!" If we look into the eternal world, and there behold what *follows* death, ſurely we cannot remain unmoved.

Man is immortal; it is the fleſh only that dies: the ſpirit is incorruptible. Hence death is the moſt eventful period. The body returns to duſt; but the ſpirit aſcends to God; and enters then upon its eternal ſtate. But the ſtate of all men is not alike beyond the grave—*The wicked*

is driven away in his wickedneſs. The guilty ſinner then knows, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Guilt ſubjects him to the divine diſpleaſure; and moral depravity unfits him for that place, into which nothing that defileth can poſſibly enter. Fearful moment! All his hopes are now like a ſpider's web; his imaginary refuges fail; and the wrath of God 'beats upon his naked ſoul, in one eternal ſtorm.' The rich man, (Luke xvi.) can tell us all about it. He died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torment. And thus will it happen to all who know not God. He that made them will have no mercy on them; whatever their reſpective ſituation may have been in this life. Death, that mighty leveller, will reduce them all to a ſad equality. He that fared ſumptuouſly every day, had not a drop of water to cool his burning tongue, when once he had paſſed the tremendous gulph.

How different the ſtate of a good man! *The righteous hath hope in his death.* The day of his death is infinitely better than the day of his birth: it is his coronation day; the final cloſe of all his troubles. He ſhall ſorrow no more. Whatever he underwent in paſſing through this vale of tears; however numerous and ſevere his trials, they are all over. The Lamb in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed him. He ſhall eat of the tree of

life which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God. He enters upon his reſt, and ſhall go no more out for ever. He is happy, as God is happy; and ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation.

Thus death is always a ſolemn and affecting event: but ſometimes, circumſtances render it peculiarly ſo: and this is now the caſe. We have conveyed no common mortal to the grave. Here lies the cold, the exanimated clay of a good man; of an eminently good man; a faithful, highly favoured miniſter of the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God. When a good man dies, it is a common loſs; thus the Pſalmiſt viewed it. *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth!* The death of ſuch a man is a national loſs, for "the ſtrength of empire is religion." *Righteouſneſs exalteth a nation.* Good men are *the ſalt of the earth.* It is particularly a loſs to the cauſe of God on earth: there is one labourer leſs in the vineyard; one watchman leſs upon the walls of Jeruſalem. The death of that good man whom we are now bewailing, is a great loſs to the churches of Chriſt. His ardent love for the *whole* truth; his flaming zeal; his chaſte converſation will be long remembered by many.

But you, my brethren, who compoſe the church and congregation in this place, you have

had a breach made upon you; a breach that can not eaſily be repaired. You have loſt a valuable miniſter; a man who laboured hard for your eternal good; a man whoſe grand aim was to make you happy for ever. You know how frequently he has warned you to flee from the wrath to come; how plainly he has pointed you to the Lamb of God, as the only ſacrifice for your ſins. Yes, ye are witneſſes how he has prayed for you, and wept over you. You have often heard him raiſe within theſe walls his charming voice, in publiſhing glad tidings to Zion. This night twelve-months, the place that I am now occupying, was occupied by him. This *very* night twelve-months you heard the goſpel in this *very* place from *his* mouth: But it is all over; you ſhall hear his voice, you ſhall ſee his face no more. There lies all that could die of a good man; a faithful miniſter; a tender father; and an affectionate huſband. His lips are cloſed in ſilence; and a long night hangs upon his eyes. Duſt is returning to duſt; and corruption already commences its riot.

Painful as the ſtroke has been to you, there are thoſe on whom it has fallen with greater ſeverity. You may be provided with another miniſter; but who can make up the loſs to his bereaved family? Who can reſtore him to the deeply afflicted partner of his life? Who like him, can ſooth her ſorrows, and cheer her on the

rugged path of time? Who can reſtore the fond father to five dear helpleſs babes? Cruel death! Inexorable monſter! What haſt thou done? But the Lord reigneth, and we will be ſtill.

The preſent diſpenſation is not only ſolemn and affecting, but it is likewiſe alarming. It has a loud voice: not to attend to it would be highly criminal. It ſpeaks to us all. Death always ſpeaks loudly: but ſome deaths louder than others. The preſent ſpeaks loud enough to be heard by THIS CHURCH AND CONGREGATION. Methinks, with ſtrong emphaſis it now ſaith,—UNTO YOU OH MEN OF THIS PLACE I CALL! You have had a great loſs; but is there not a cauſe? God forbid that I ſhould charge the death of your miniſter upon you! Yet I know it is poſſible for a people to murder their miniſter; and that by the moſt cruel means. There needs neither the poiſon nor the dagger; it may be done effectually without either. I hope it is quite inapplicable; but it may not be altogether uſeleſs, to aſk, Are there none of you who have pierced him through with many ſorrows? Has his heart never been wrung by your unkindneſs? Has your miſbehaviour in your chriſtian profeſſion, never cauſed him to ſay,—*Oh that I had in the wilderneſs a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them!* (Jer. ix. 2.) Though I thus ſpeak, I am ſure it

has no general application. Few men were better beloved by their people than he was. Your many prayers for his recovery; your tender ſolicitude for his welfare; your preſent evident diſtreſs, all ſpeak for you: your tears do you honour. But let me ſpeak it again; ſhould there be a cruel individual amongſt you, to whom the charge applies, I would not for a world be that man: He muſt anſwer for it another day. God will avenge his own elect.

Where this has not been the caſe; where nothing but kindneſs marked your behaviour towards your departed friend, has he had no occaſion to weep in ſecret on your account, becauſe though you eſteemed the man, you neglected his meſſage? Ah brethren! it is to be feared, unleſs your ſtate, as a church and congregation be ſingular, that the word preached did not profit all of you. Some of you may yet be in your ſins. God has borne long with you; but he may have been weary of forbearing; he may have been angry at your infidelity; and in judgment taken away his ſervant. I do not ſay this is the caſe; but if it be only a *poſſible* caſe, it ſhould cauſe ſearchings of heart amongſt you.

It is a providence that ſpeaks to us all, as MORTAL MEN. In a little time, according to the common courſe of nature, the place that now

knows us, ſhall know us no more. Time with rapid wing, bears us away to that place where no device nor work is found; to that ſtate where there is no diſtinction, but that of juſt and unjuſt. But who can reckon upon the common extent of human life? Behold, before our eyes a young man, who had not lived out half his days, called to eternity in the thirty-fourth year of his life. Should not this awaken our concern, and excite us to make that important enquiry, WHO SHALL BE THE NEXT? He who bids the faireſt for length of years, may be the firſt to fall. Let us then ſo number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.

We will now "turn to the bright reverſe of this mortifying ſcene." We have hitherto looked at the dark ſide of the cloud; let us now contemplate its luminous one.

Death we admit is a penalty—*by ſin came death.* Death is an enemy—*the laſt enemy;* but bleſſed be God, he is a conquered enemy. The captain of our ſalvation has deſtroyed him who had the power of death. Influenced by the faith of God's elect; believers in all ages have triumphed over death; they have ſang with their expiring breath; and exulted amidſt the ſwellings of Jordan.

Death is amongſt the privileges of the children of God. *Death is yours.* He meets them as a friend, as an envoy commiſſioned by their heavenly Father to bring them to his throne. Our eyes have frequently beheld the victory of faith, in the dark valley. Aſſaulted on either hand by pale diſeaſe, and its long train of attendants, we have ſeen good men riſing ſuperior to all the evils of their ſituation; feeling a "majeſty in death;" and entering the eternal world ſhouting, *Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory.*

This is not all. The total deſtruction of death is laid in the irreverſible counſel of the Moſt High. The laſt enemy ſhall be deſtroyed. Death himſelf muſt die. The tabernacle of God ſhall be with men; he will wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more death. The ſea ſhall give up its dead, and thoſe that are in their graves ſhall come forth. Then the Lord Jeſus will make his triumph complete, and caſt death and hell into the lake of fire and brimſtone. The re-animated duſt of the redeemed, ſhall then be perfectly releaſed from the bondage of corruption, and made like unto the glorious body of their great head: the whole number of the Elect, ſhall then be preſented before the preſence of the divine glory, with exceeding great joy.

One grand indiſpenſible inquiry yet remains.—By what means may we attain to the reſurrection of the juſt? In ſearch of this important ſubject, we are not left to wander in the maze of uncertainty and doubt; the way into the holieſt is made manifeſt. There are three things abſolutely requiſite for a man to be acquainted with, before he can enter into life.

First, The pardon of our ſins. The ſcripture propoſes this unſpeakable gift by the blood of Jeſus. *We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of our ſins.* Ephes. i. 7.

Secondly, The juſtification of our perſons. Proviſion for which is made by the obedience of the Son of God. *He is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* Rom. x. 4.

Thirdly, The ſanctification of our nature. *Jeſus is of God made unto us ſanctification.* 1 Cor. i. 30. By the influence of his Spirit upon our hearts, "we are made partakers of the divine nature; ſanctified in body, ſoul and ſpirit; and changed thus into the divine image, as by the Spirit of our God." 2 Cor. iii. 8.

This is the only method of ſalvation countenanced in Scripture; and it ſeems a method, "juſt to God, and ſafe to man."

To conclude. Though we ſorrow to day, we do not ſorrow as thoſe who have no hope. God,

who has taken away our dear brother, will take care of his. He will be a huſband to the forlorn widow, and a father to the dear tender babes. *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.* God will provide; he will ſurely do them good; he has the hearts of all men in his hands; he will raiſe up friends for them; and eventually make it appear, that even this dark diſpenſation, is amongſt the all things that work together for good.

He that has the government upon his ſhoulders will take care of you, my brethren, as a church. A paſtor is provided for you; and he who knows him, will bring him amongſt you in his own way, and time. Truſt in the Lord, he will never forſake Zion: her walls are ever before him. Take his word for your rule; live according to the ſame; ſeek him by prayer and ſupplication; and you ſhall yet praiſe him.

We now bid farewell, a *long* farewell, to the ſleeping duſt of our departed brother: but bleſſed be God, though it be a long farewell, it will not be an everlaſting one. We ſhall meet again. What we are to day ſowing in diſhonour, ſhall be raiſed in glory. The trumpet ſhall ſound; our brother will ariſe; we ſhall meet, no more to part. When Jeſus comes, he will bring all his ſaints with him. Comfort ye one another with theſe things.

A

SERMON

Occasioned by the Death

OF THE

REV. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

JOHN xiv. 18.

I will not leave you comfortleſs. I will come unto you.

SO deeply am I ſenſible of the loſs ſuſtained by this church in general, not to ſay by the neareſt relative of my dear departed brother, that on a partial view of their circumſtances, (and our views, eſpecially of afflictive events, are too commonly partial,) I could not be ſurpriſed, were ſome now preſent, ready to exclaim, "Is there any ſorrow like unto our ſorrow, wherewith the Lord has this day afflicted us?" But though I ſcarcely know where a church could ſuſtain an equal loſs, by the removal of ſo young a paſtor; nor can I conceive, there exiſts a widow, whom death has plundered of a richer ſtore of bleſſings, by taking from her and from her infant care, the guide of their youth; yet, on more mature conſideration, we muſt not admit that lamentation to be applicable, even to thoſe who feel the moſt pungent grief in this aſſembly. The event which has occaſioned our preſent meeting, muſt deeply

affect even ſtrangers, whoſe hearts know how to feel; but all the deareſt friends of the deceaſed muſt acknowledge, that the days of tribulation which preceded this mournful evening, were not the ſeaſon of diſplaying the Lord's anger, but of the clear manifeſtation of his faithfulneſs and love: They were to him the days of heaven upon earth. Surely they who drank with him the deepeſt out of his cup of affliction, could find no ſavor of the curſe, no, not at the bottom; nor could they drink the bitter, without taſting alſo of the ſweet, which was not ſparingly dropt into it, but copiouſly infuſed. And after ſuch proofs and illuſtrations of the divine fidelity, I cannot but believe, that ſhe who needs them moſt of all, ſhall find farther ſtores of conſolation laid up for her relief: ſince God her Maker is her huſband, who giveth ſongs in the night.

This church alſo muſt be reminded, that there was a church at Jeruſalem, near eighteen centuries ago, which ſuſtained a loſs unſpeakably greater than that which they now bewail; while yet the ſorrow which was *then* endured, was quickly turned into joy. And your affectionate paſtor, who, both in health and in ſickneſs, cared ſo much for your welfare, did not heſitate to recommend to your attention, the kind aſſurance which was given for *their* relief; as believing it to contain ground of encouragement, on which *you* alſo are

authorized to depend. He who ſaid to his dear diſciples, " I will not leave *you* comfortleſs orphans, I will come unto *you*, " has the ſame reſpect to his whole church in every age; and you, my brethren, may as ſafely rely on his gracious promiſe, as his very apoſtles.

Yes, beloved, we are authorized to make a general application of this word of conſolation; and muſt affirm, That the promiſed preſence of the bleſſed Redeemer is the beſt ſource of comfort to all his people, in every time of trouble.

In complying with the requeſt of my dear deceaſed brother, I ſhall firſt conſider the ſubject in reference to thoſe to whom it was immediately addreſſed; and then endeavour to apply it to the preſent occaſion.

FIRST, *Let us notice the immediate reference of this declaration, to our Lord's diſciples, who were then favoured with his bodily preſence.*

You are well aware that the words I have read were ſpoken by the bleſſed Jeſus, to thoſe who followed him in the days of his humiliation; and that when he thus addreſſed them, ſorrow had filled their hearts, becauſe he had juſt announced his approaching departure. He came

from the Father, and was come into the world, and though the world was made by him, yet the world knew him not; but he had made himſelf known to theſe his diſciples, whom he had choſen out of the world; and now when he was about to leave them, and go unto the Father, though his ſtupid and ungrateful countrymen would rather rejoice at his leaving the earth, than bewail it, yet his diſciples could not but weep and lament, and be ſorrowful; and ſurely, well they might, at the thought of loſing ſuch an invaluable Friend!

Eſpecially, we might expect this to be the caſe, if we reflect on the manner in which he was to be removed from them. They were to ſee him falſely accuſed, unjuſtly condemned, and cruelly murdered; being nailed to the croſs by wicked hands, ſuſpended between two thieves, and while thus numbered with tranſgreſſors, inſulted and derided in his laſt agonies. Yes, he would be treated as the object of national abhorrence and execration, and that by the only people upon earth who profeſſed to be the worſhippers of the true God. And his diſciples muſt either view this barbarous treatment of their bleſſed Lord, or hide themſelves from the ſhocking ſcene, by forſaking him in the hour of diſtreſs. In the mean while, he was alſo apparently abandoned by God himſelf, the zeal of whoſe houſe had conſumed

him; the Lord was pleaſed to bruiſe him, and put him to grief; he was reſolved to make his ſoul an offering for ſin, and therefore he called on his ſword to awake againſt him, who was their good Shepherd; though he was one in covenant, yea, one in nature with himſelf; who could, without robbery, claim equality with God. What could be more ſurpriſing, diſtreſſing and perplexing to his diſciples, than ſuch a ſeries of events!

While Jeſus was with them, he fed them, and kept them as a ſhepherd doth his flock; he laid them like lambs in his boſom, and led them on gradually in the paths of truth and righteouſneſs, as they were able to bear it. He had been gentle among them, as a nurſing father is gentle towards his little children; pitying their infirmities, rectifying their miſtakes, ſupplying their wants, healing their maladies; manifeſting to them his Father's will, and keeping them in his name:—And muſt they now loſe his viſible preſence, and ſee him no more?

He had been little more than *three and thirty* years in the world, and moſt of them had known him but a very ſmall part of that period; they had, however, now beheld his glory, and were convinced that it was the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

They were ſatisfied that he alone had the words of eternal life; they believed and knew that he was the Chriſt, the Son of the living God; though at preſent they underſtood but imperfectly that plan of Redemption, which rendered it expedient and neceſſary that he ſhould ſuffer all theſe things, and then enter into glory. This remaining ignorance muſt abundantly enhance their grief, at the intimations given them of his departure being at hand. *

But, in theſe words, their gracious Lord ſuggeſts, that *they* had no occaſion to ſink under their ſorrows. He would *not leave* them *comfortleſs*, like deſtitute *orphans* who had no affectionate parent, no wiſe tutor, no faithful guardian, to ſup-

* The conceptions of the disciples, on the subject of Christ's atoning sacrifice, appear to have been much less distinct than those of David, Isaiah, and many of the Old Testament saints, who lived before the declension of the Jewish church; which appears to have lost much of its spiritual light, and to have become more and more carnalized, from the days of Malachi, till the coming of our Lord. And as it seemed necessary, that this general declension, and ignorance of the nature of the Messiah's character and kingdom, should be suffered to take place, in order to the fulfilment of prophecy, in the death of our Savior by the hands of his own countrymen; so there was an expediency, and a display of wisdom, in concealing from the disciples the necessity and glorious design of Christ's death, that they might not rejoice in so awful an event, till after it was over: had their ideas been clear on this head, they must have rejoiced in his sufferings at the very time of them; but it seemed more fitting that they should mourn then, and that their sorrow should be turned into joy, after his resurrection.

ply their wants, ſympathize with them, protect them from evil, or inſtruct them in the way of duty. No, he had promiſed them his holy Spirit, to be their Comforter and Monitor; and here he engages alſo, to come again to them himſelf. *I will come unto you*, ſaith our Lord. This promiſe was fulfilled to them in ſeveral ways:—

1. In his *repeated appearances* to them, after his reſurrection. Thus, as he ſuggeſts in the next verſe, although in a little while, the world ſhould ſee him no more, yet they ſhould ſee him; and that ſight ſhould be the pledge that his words ſhould hold good,—"Becauſe I live ye ſhall live alſo." Accordingly the evangeliſts atteſt, that he "ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, unto the apoſtles whom he had choſen, being ſeen of them forty days," before he was taken up into glory: for God who raiſed him up the third day after his crucifixion, "ſhewed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witneſſes choſen before of God, even to us," ſaith Peter, "who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead; whom he commanded to preach unto the people, and to teſtify that he is appointed to be the Judge of the living and the dead; and that to him all the prophets gave witneſs, that through his name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins." There-

fore though he ſoon left them again, being carried up into heaven, yet their underſtandings having been opened by him, that they might underſtand the ſcriptures, and ſee how it behoved him to ſuffer, and to riſe again, "they worſhipped him, when he was parted from them, and returned to Jeruſalem with great joy," where they waited to be endued with power from on high, and received the promiſed effuſion of the Spirit, not many days afterward. But,

2. It received a more permanent accompliſhment, in *the continued enjoyment of his ſpiritual Preſence, and divine Influence.*. We fully aſcertain this privilege to be included in the text, by comparing this promiſe,—*I will come unto you,* with thoſe declarations, recorded by Matthew, which admit of no ſolution without the acknowledgement of Chriſt's proper divinity:—*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them. And lo I am with you always to the end of the world. Amen.*

3. *At the end of the world,* it ſhall receive a farther fulfilment, by our Lord's coming again in that human nature, which "*it behoved heaven to receive,* until the times of the reſtitution of all things, of which God ſpake by the mouth of his holy prophets ſince the world began." Then he who went to prepare a place for his diſciples, and

all his ſubſequent followers, will come again, and receive them to himſelf; that where he is, there they may be alſo. Then they who were troubled for their adherence to his cauſe, ſhall enter into reſt; when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven. At that ſame period, will he take vengeance on them who know not God, and who obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and puniſh them with everlaſting deſtruction; when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them who believe. For God will bring with him them who now ſleep in Jeſus, while the believers who remain, at that time, alive upon earth, ſhall feel a change paſs upon their bodies, to render them like thoſe who are newly raiſed from the dead, and all "ſhall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore," ſays Paul, "comfort one another with theſe words." He who teſtified theſe things to his diſciples, while he was yet with them, repeated his promiſe long afterwards, to his ſervant John, ſaying, "Sūrely, I come quickly." May we unite with that beloved diſciple, in ſaying, "Amen. Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus."

SECONDLY, *Let us apply the ſame conſolation to the relief of thoſe who are moſt affected by the late bereaving providence.*

This Church has loſt a moſt diligent, faithful,

affectionate and valuable Paſtor, and far be it from me to make light of your loſs. All thoſe Churches who knew him only by occaſional viſits, all good men who had any opportunity of appretiating his worth, muſt ſympathize with you; while they grieve to think that they themſelves, who ſaw his face ſo ſeldom, ſhall ſee it no more. His brethren in the miniſtry, who enjoyed the pleaſure and advantage of his friendſhip and correſpondence, feel a loſs which they will ever deplore. How then muſt you regret his removal, who were, many of you, the ſeals of his miniſtry; who, all of you, hoped long to enjoy his conſtant labours; and for whoſe welfare he laid himſelf out, with ſuch unremitting aſſiduity? The Paſtor whoſe abſence you mourn, poſſeſſed ſuch an aſſemblage of lovely graces and acceptable qualifications, as are found united but ſeldom, even in truly chriſtian miniſters. He had the firmeſt attachment to evangelical truth, and the moſt conſtant regard to practical godlineſs; he united remarkable ſoundneſs of judgement, with uncommon warmth of affections. I never ſaw, at leaſt in one of his years, ſuch active, ardent zeal, conjoined with ſuch gentleneſs, modeſty and deep humility; ſo much of the little child, and ſo much of the Evangeliſt, I can ſcarcely forbear ſaying, of the Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt. I know not how to flatter you, with the hope of obtaining another Miniſter; or myſelf, with the expectation of finding another Friend, in

whom *all* theſe charming qualities ſhall be found, in an *equal* degree. He was, indeed, "a burning and a ſhining light, and we rejoiced in his light, for a ſeaſon;" but now we muſt lament, that he ſhines no more on earth; though we doubt not, that he ſhines like the ſun, in the kingdom of his Father.

While he abode among us, his affections were evidently and eminently in heaven; his work, his family, and his people, were the only objects of regard, which made him willing to forego the bliſs of the eternal world. And when he perceived that it was the Lord's will he ſhould depart, your welfare was ſtill his chief concern. For your conſolation and benefit, he wiſhed this paſſage to be conſidered at his funeral. He once alluded to another ſcripture, but laying that aſide, leſt it ſhould occaſion too much being ſaid of himſelf, he fixed upon this; remarking "if *he* comes to you, all will be well, you need not regret *my* removal." So you ſee, brethren, the deſign of your dear paſtor was to encourage you to claim a ſhare in the promiſed preſence of the Redeemer; which he knew extended to all his churches, and to every individual believer. He perceived that he was going to leave you, *he* could not promiſe to come again to you, though it was his great conſolation to hope that you, in ſucceſſion, will follow him; and meanwhile, the preſence of his great Maſter, as to his

divine nature, and the increaſing influence of his Spirit, would be a ſufficient compenſation for any loſs you could ſuſtain by his departure. The ſpiritual preſence of Chriſt could make up for the want of his bodily preſence, to thoſe who knew what it was to enjoy the latter; it muſt then aſſuredly be ſufficient to ſupply the abſence of any under-ſhepherd. With this thought my dear brother conſoled himſelf, in the beginning of his illneſs; "If," ſaid he, in a letter written the firſt Lord's-day that he was confined from public worſhip, "If I am to depart hence, to be no more ſeen, I know the Lord can carry on his cauſe as well without me as with me; he who redeemed the ſheep with his blood, will never ſuffer them to periſh for want of ſhepherding, eſpecially, ſince He himſelf is the chief Shepherd of ſouls."

Let me therefore direct your attention to the grounds on which you may ſafely expect the fulfilment of the promiſe, the magnitude of the promiſe itſelf, and the conſequent obligations under which you are laid by it. Conſider,

1. *The grounds on which you may ſafely build an expectation that our Lord Jeſus will come unto you.*

Our Lord's ability to make good ſuch a promiſe, muſt here be noticed. Not only had he an inherent power to lay down his life, and to take it up

again, in conſequence of which he ſpent forty days with his diſciples, before his aſcenſion; but he has power to perform his ſtanding engagements with his whole church, of being *with them, alway, to the end of the world,* whenever, and wherever, *two or three are gathered together in his name;* which promiſes muſt be connected with the text to enable you to claim any part in the conſolation it will adminiſter. Some modern Enthuſiaſts, (who can believe any thing which does not imply that they are ſo *guilty* as to need the incarnate Son of God to make an atonement for their ſins, by his precious blood,) have fancied that the body of Jeſus, who according to them was a mere man like ourſelves, aſcended no higher than the Atmoſphere, which ſurrounds the earth, and that he occaſionally deſcends from thence to this globe, to viſit inviſibly and one at a time, the various congregations of chriſtians. This idea, it has been ſaid, "cannot poſſibly do us any harm;" but, alas! it can do us but little good. If the Saviour ſhould thus viſit all thoſe who are called by his name, our turn to be ſo favored may occur but once in a lifetime; or whether they who have invented this ſolution of Mat. xviii. 20, would admit us, whom they repreſent as irrational idolaters, to enjoy any ſhare in his viſits, I know not. Nor would it be of conſequence, whether it were granted or denied; a mere man ſurveying us inviſibly, now and then, could impart to us no ſpiritual bleſſing. But,

if our Great High Prieſt be indeed, in the moſt exalted ſenſe, The Son of God, who is "*paſſed through*" * theſe lower Heavens, and is "*made higher* than the Heavens," having "aſcended up *far above* all Heavens, that he might *fill all things*," (according to the paſſage which we heard explained this morning†) and, if "*all power* be given unto him, in Heaven and in earth," *then*, my brethren, your faith ſtands upon a firm foundation. He who, when he was upon earth, as to his Humanity, could ſpeak of himſelf as being "in heaven;" can as eaſily grant you the preſence of his Divinity, now his human nature is in the world above.

Let *the extent of his regard to his church*, be alſo remembered. In his laſt prayer with his diſciples, he prayed not alone for them who were preſent, but for all who ſhould believe through their word. And "he ever liveth, to make interceſſion for ‡ all them, who come unto God by him." In every age hath his church been the

---

* διεληλυθοτα τους ουρανους. Heb. iv. 14. vii. 26. Eph. iv. 9, 10.

† By brother West, of Wantage.

‡ εντυγχανειν υπερ αὐτων. Heb. vii. 25. Mr. Belsham, a profeſſed advocate of rational religion, ſuppoſes that *the writers* of the new Teſtament *themſelves annexed no very diſtinct idea to the phraſe* of Chriſt's making intercession, becauſe εντυγχανειν, he obſerves, expreſſes any interference of one perſon *for* or *againſt* another. It is true, that in the Epiſtle to the Romans, Paul mentions Chriſt's *making intercession* FOR us, viii. 34; and Eli-

object of his gracious regard: and he has fulfilled the promiſe which he made in the days of Zechariah, "Lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith Jehovah. And many nations ſhall be my people: and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, and thou ſhalt know that Jehovah God of hoſts hath ſent me unto thee."—To the primitive church under all the pagan perſecutions, was this promiſe fulfilled; to the Waldenſes and Abigenſes in the darkeſt times of Popery; to the firſt reformers from Antichriſtian error, and to their faithful ſucceſſors; whether conformiſts or non-conformiſts; in this Iſland, on the continent of Europe, or in the wilds of North America. And at this day, wherever two or three are aſſembled in his name, at Birmingham or at Briſtol, in London

---

jah's *making intercession* AGAINST *Israel*, xi. 2. And he uses this same verb, but with different prepositions, in both places. But can any ambiguity arise from employing one word, with prepositions of opposite import, to denote opposite things? Will not the things thus opposed rather illustrate each other? Εντυγχανειν ΥΠΕΡ, is to plead *for*, and Εντυγχανειν ΚΑΤΑ, to plead *against*: the latter phrase is repeatedly used in the Maccabees, to express the act of *complaining against*, *bringing an accusation against*, *making complaint against* a person or persons. 1 Mac. viii. 32. x. 61, 63. xi. 25. And as this is the part of a proſecutor or accuſer, ſo the former is the part of an advocate, patron, or intercessor. The Jews have adopted the two Greek terms Παρακλητος, an *advocate*, used 1 John ii. 1. and Κατηγορος, an *accuſer*, used Rev. xii. 10. and employ both in the Chaldee paraphraſe of Job xxxiii. 23. "An Angel is prepared, one *advocate* (פרקליטא) among a thouſand *accuſers* (קטיגוריא)." See Outram de Sacrificiis. Lib. II. Cap. VII.

or at Edinburgh, in Old Holland or in New Holland, at Mudnabatty, or at Otaheite, at the Cape of Good Hope or in Kentucky, there may our diſtant brethren, as well as ourſelves, expect our glorious Lord to fulfil his word, *I will come unto you.*

The *expreſs promiſes* he has made, of which the text is one, and ſeveral others we have recited, forbid us to doubt of the beſtowment of this invaluable bleſſing. Jeſus is the "faithful and true Witneſs; the ſame yeſterday to day and for ever. In him all the promiſes of God are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."—He aſſured his ſervant Paul, in a ſeaſon of peculiar difficulty, "*My* grace is ſufficient for thee;" and the grace which could ſuffice for him, who accounted himſelf the chief of ſinners, and leſs than the leaſt of ſaints, is ſufficient for us alſo. His Strength is diſplayed to the greateſt advantage in our weakneſs. O remember how it was lately diſplayed in the weakneſs, the extreme weakneſs, of your dear dying paſtor, on whom the power of Chriſt ſo viſibly reſted. When his heart and fleſh were failing, how did he rejoice in God his Savior, as the ſtrength of his heart, and his portion for ever! And is there a mourner preſent ſo feeble, ſo diſconſolate, ſo bereaved of every created ſource of bliſs, as that this grace will not ſuffice for her ſupport? Or will he, who kept his

word with ſuch "punctilious veracity" to the Huſband, forget his promiſe to the Widow and the Fatherleſs? Aſſuredly he will not.

Remember, my brethren, the *readineſs of the Redeemer to hear and anſwer prayer.*—Though Paul beſought him thrice upon one ſubject, before he received an immediate reply, the promiſe was fulfilled even before it was pronounced; he, like one who lived long before him, and like myriads who have ſince made trial of the ſame reſource, was "ſtrengthened with ſtrength in his ſoul," before the Saviour expreſsly declared, "My ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs." Continue therefore inſtant in prayer. Remember the apparent rebuffs encountered at firſt by the woman of Canaan, and how amply her faith was anſwered at laſt. Did not Jesus inculcate this maxim, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" and ſpake a parable to illuſtrate and inforce that duty? Rich bleſſings, I truſt, are ſtill in reſerve for you, in anſwer to the many fervent petitions, which your dear Paſtor offered up on your behalf, from the time of his firſt acquaintance with this church, and during better than nine years* wherein he has more fully undertaken the overſight of you in the Lord. May you yourſelves pray without ceaſing, and plead with the Lord his own exceeding great and precious promiſes, which will be found to

* He was Ordained August, 1790.

contain bleſſings fully proportioned to all your neceſſities.

It was doubtleſs in conſequence of many comfortable *evidences*, that *God has a number of ſpiritual worſhippers* among you, that my dear Brother was encouraged to expect this declaration would be certainly fulfilled in your preſent circumſtances. But though I gladly indulge a ſimilar confidence, yet neither I, whoſe perſonal knowledge of you is very confined, nor he, whoſe acquaintance was much more intimate and general, could anſwer for every profeſſor among you. From what has taken place in all the large congregations I have known, I am afraid leſt the hopes of your paſtor may be diſappointed, as to ſome individuals, whom he never ſuſpected, but whoſe future apoſtaſy will indicate the ſuperficial nature of their preſent profeſſion, and enſure them a final portion with hypocrites and unbelievers. Greatly ſhall I rejoice, if not *one* ſuch character ſhould ever be found amongſt you; but to render the conſolation in the text more certain in its perſonal application, I muſt exhort you to examine and prove your own ſelves, and to give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure. Unleſs you are ſuch of whom God diſapproves, Chriſt is in you, the hope of glory: he dwells in your hearts by faith, and you begin to be conformed to his lovely image. You account mental nearneſs to God the chief good. You value

communion with him above all the world. Is not this the caſe my brethren? I truſt you can ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee. Fear not, that the Lord will fruſtrate the deſires his own Spirit has excited, or abandon that ſoul whoſe wiſhes centre wholly in himſelf.

In the meanwhile to encreaſe the intenſeneſs of your deſires after the preſence of Chriſt, let us proceed to conſider

2. *The Magnitude of the promiſe.*

Has Chriſt ſaid, "I will come unto you?" and have you been told to night that his preſence can make up every loſs? Well may you credit the aſſertion, if you conſider what is intended by the promiſe in the text.

It imports that *he will manifeſt to you his Glory.* And O how delightful the ſight! "Lord!" ſaid Jude, "how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf unto us, and not unto the world?" This exclamation might denote partial ignorance; as well as grateful ſurprize: but the ſecret was in great meaſure explained, when the Spirit was poured out from on high. Then Paul obſerved "God, who commanded the light to ſhine out of dark-

neſs, hath ſhined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt:" ſo that while others have "their underſtandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance which is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs (or rather the *callouſneſs*,*) of their hearts; we all, with open face, beholding, as in a *mirror*, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

If the Lord grant you his ſpecial preſence, you will not only realize his eſſential and mediatorial glory, but be cheered alſo with a *lively ſenſe of his love*. And what conſolation can equal that which muſt reſult from ſuch a ſource? "To know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge," is a bleſſing which the Apoſtle conſidered as immediately connected with being filled with all the fulneſs of God;" and the beſtowment of which was a proof that he is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we aſk or think." Unleſs we could conceive the full *extent* of the happineſs produced by the redemption of Chriſt throughout the whole empire of God; unleſs we could comprehend the *length* of eternity, in which the felicity of the ſaved ſhall be for ever increaſing, as faſt

* δια τὴν πώρωσιν τῆς καρδιας αυτων. Eph. iv. 18. Πωρωσις, concretio quæ in callum fit. In sacris literis πωρωσις καρδιας quum cor occalluit. *Scapula. Robertson.*

as God ſhall increase their capacity of enjoyment; unleſs we could meaſure the loweſt *depths* of hell, from whence our Saviour has ranſomed us, with the invaluable price of his blood; and the *height* of glory to which we ſhall be raiſed, as the reward of Immanuel's obedience; it will be impoſſible fully to conceive the greatneſs of his love. However, enough may be known to convince us that his favour is better than life, and to fill us even in the preſent ſtate, amidſt all our outward trials, and even our inward conflicts, with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

Reflect that if Chriſt ſhould come unto you, according to this gracious promiſe, *he will communicate unto you*, more largely, *the ſupply of his Spirit.* And ſhall not this fit you for every duty, ſupport you under every preſſure, and enſure you the victory over every ſpiritual enemy? Yes, my beloved, if you enjoy much of the preſence of Jesus, it will make you active for God, and excite you to every good work. You will not be ſlothful in buſineſs, but fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord. You will aim at the divine glory in every thing, even in all your civil employments. You will gladly conſecrate the gain of your merchandize to the Lord, and honour him with your ſubſtance. It will rejoice your ſoul to think that you are "not your own," but, "bought with a price," and you

will feel yourſelves bound to "glorify God, with your bodies, and with your ſpirits, which are God's:" nor can you forbear to admit his claim to all which you poſſeſs; for the ſilver is mine and the gold is mine," ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and your thankful hearts muſt ſay Amen. You will wiſh to inſcribe on all your property, and on all your utenſils that bleſſed motto, *Holineſs to the Lord.* The preſence of Chriſt will inſpire you with ardour, reſolution and zeal, to promote his kingdom among men. You will not let your *Lord's-day Schools* decline; nor will your contribution to the MISSION, in which you ſtood foremoſt ſo early, now be ſuffered to fall off, becauſe that dear man is gone to glory, who firſt excited your attention to theſe good works; but you will remember that Chriſt himſelf is with you, who walks among his golden candleſticks, to notice how their light ſhineth before men, to the honour of their heavenly Father.—If you ſhould meet with farther Trials, the preſence of Jeſus will ſuffice to ſupport you under the croſs, as it did the Apoſtles and primitive chriſtians. O brethren! I pray you may live as ſeeing him who is inviſible. Remember that Chriſt, when upon earth, could not do more for his firſt diſciples, than he can now perform for you, by his divine preſence. Ah!.... if he were here, in his glorified body, . . or even in the lowly form in which he appeared in the days of his humiliation, ... if he often called upon

you, ... or you could, at any time, reſort to him . . . or if he lodged at your houſe, ... or came thither as often as he viſited the houſe of Lazarus, at Bethany; . . . . . would you not then conſult him in every thing; and always follow his good advice? and fear no conſequences, when you complied with his directions? And do you believe the Divinity of Chriſt, and act otherwiſe now? O ſhameful inconſiſtency! Look unto Jeſus. *Look off*, my brethren, from all other objects; from all falſe confidences, from all diſcouragements, from all the foaming billows, which threaten to ſwallow you up, *unto Jeſus.* He is above, looking down upon you. He is at hand, ready to aſſiſt you. See, how he ſtretches forth his arm to ſupport you, and keep you from ſinking in the deep waters. Separate from him you can do nothing; but the weakeſt can do all things, can bear all burdens, can conquer all the hoſts of hell, through Chriſt ſtrengthening him.

If you are thus authorized to expect the preſence of Chriſt, will he not *take you under the care of his providence.* How ſweet is the idea of an omnipreſent God! Not a local Deity, as the gods of the heathen were ſuppoſed to be, even by their own worſhippers: but a God *afar off*, as well *as at hand;* preſent with his captive ſervants, to check the violence of the fire, and ſtop the mouths of lions, in favour of his exiles in Babylon, as

ſurely as ever he had been ready to hear prayer in his temple at Jeruſalem; a God in India, as well as in England; who ſhewed himſelf to be preſent with his ſervant *Pearce* in Birmingham, to make all his bed in his ſickneſs; and was at the ſame time preſent, though we know not where, with his ſervant *Ward* and his companions, whether they were traverſing the mighty ocean, or had reached the deſired haven. Perhaps, they have already met with *Carey*, and *Thomas*, and *Fountain*, and Jeſus is in the midſt of them, while they are praying for us in Bengal. Yes, Aſa was long ago reminded, that "the eyes of JeHoVaH run to and fro throughout the whole earth, that he may ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe hearts are perfect towards him." And how comfortable is it to reflect, that this attribute of Deity, and every other, belongs to God the Son, as well as to God the Father. The huſband of the church is the God of the whole earth. Jeſus has all power on earth as well as in heaven. They therefore, who "ſeek firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs," ſhall find "all things added unto them." "My God," (ſaid Paul to the Philippians) "ſhall ſupply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus." Caſt on him therefore all your care: he careth for all his churches; and though you know not which way to look, he can find another paſtor for this church, to repair the

breach that death has made. He can raiſe up friends for the widow and the children of his departed ſervant; yea, he himſelf will be their guardian and defence. A father to the fatherleſs, and the patron of the widow, is God in his holy habitation; he will never fail them, nor forſake them.

FINALLY, The preſence of Chriſt, with his people on earth, ſhall *prepare* them *for the uninterrupted enjoyment of his preſence in the cæleſtial world.* He himſelf will be with you walking in the way, and the fooliſh ſhall not err therein. He will guide you by his counſel, and afterward receive you into glory. One of you after another ſhall follow your dear paſtor, perhaps before the end of this year, and four or five next year, and ſo on, till you all meet again in tha heavenly city, where the *Lord God* Almighty and the *Lamb*, are the temple of it; the glory of *God* doth enlighten it, and the *Lamb* is the light thereof; and the inhabitants drink of the pure river of the water of life, proceeding out of the throne of *God* and the *Lamb;* and there ſhall be no more curſe, but the throne of *God* and of the *Lamb* ſhall be in it; and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him, and they ſhall ſee his face, and his name ſhall be in their foreheads; for they ſhall be completely like him, when they ſhall ſee him as he is.—But let me once more beſeech you to notice

3. *The conſequent obligations under which you are laid.*

Your Lord has ſaid, "I will come unto you." *Believe him.* Take him at his word. Plead it before his throne of grace. Prove that you value his preſence above every thing. Live under an abiding conviction, that without it, you muſt be comfortleſs, notwithſtanding the preſence of every temporal enjoyment; but with it, you muſt be happy, even under the preſſure of every earthly calamity.

Let then the *expectation* that this promiſe will be accompliſhed, *moderate your ſorrows*, on the preſent occaſion, and on all others, and direct them into a proper channel. It is the preſence of Chriſt which conſtitutes the perfected felicity of our dear departed friend: But Chriſt is really preſent with his church upon earth alſo: pray for more faith to realize that truth, and your heaven ſhall be begun below. He has ſaid, "If any one love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." And what is the loſs, which the enjoyment of the preſence of Chriſt, and of his Father cannot compenſate? or, what is the affliction, under which fellowſhip with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, will not conſole you?

Let this promiſe enhance your *gratitude* for paſt mercies, and your *ſolicitude* to improve thoſe which remain. It was from him, who aſcended on high, after deſcending into the lower parts of the earth, and who received gifts for men,* that our dear brother received all his miniſterial qualifications, as well as every chriſtian grace: and it was his bleſſing alone, which rendered him ſo ſucceſsful, in winning ſouls to Chriſt. With him is the reſidue of the Spirit. He has yet bleſſings in ſtore to communicate. O live on his fulneſs! Though your beloved paſtor is gone, I truſt that the benefit which many of you received from his miniſtry will never be loſt. Miniſters die, but Jeſus lives; and his word endureth for ever. You have alſo a proſpect of ſtill enjoying his ordinances. Look up for his gracious influence to attend them, knowing that neither is he who planteth any thing, nor he who watereth; but it is God who giveth the increaſe.

May the promiſe of Chriſt's preſence excite your concern to *prepare for his coming*. Let it excite your watchfulneſs againſt every thing which would be offenſive to your bleſſed Lord. Chriſtians, Is there any thing in the daily courſe of your behaviour, or in the management of your families,

* See an excellent Sermon of brother Pearce's on Epheſ. iv. 11. *On the duty of Churches to regard Miniſters as the gift of Chriſt*, at Mr. Belſher's Ordination, 1796.

Printed for Button, Belcher, and James.

of which you would be aſhamed, if Chriſt were now upon Earth in human nature and took up his abode with you? And can you truly believe his Divinity, and not be afraid that he, whoſe eyes are as a flame of fire, ſhould ſee ſuch tranſactions? Do you not believe that he even ſearches the reins and the hearts; and has he not ſaid, that all the Churches ſhall know it? Behold, he cometh frequently, as unexpectedly as a thief: Bleſſed is he who watcheth, and keepeth his garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame.

BUT now, without confining myſelf farther to the immediate language of the text, give me leave to addreſs a few words, by way of a more *general Improvement* of the late afflictive Providence, both to the members of the church ſtatedly aſſembling in this place of worſhip, and the congregation and ſtrangers preſent.

I addreſs myſelf firſt to the CHURCH. You, my brethren, have within theſe ten days ſuſtained the loſs of a very affectionate and faithful Paſtor; a young and active, and at the ſame time an able and judicious miniſter; who had approved himſelf among you for nine or ten years, and whoſe labours you hoped to enjoy for many years to come. But he is taken away, in the midſt of his uſefulneſs, having but juſt completed the *thirty third* year of his age. In ſuch a trial you have

room to mourn. JESUS wept. And devout men made great lamentation at the death of *Stephen.*

Yet forget not to be thankful, that ever the Lord raiſed up ſuch a miniſter, and gave you the chief benefit of his labours. It was the kindneſs of providence that fixed him in this place, and continued him with you for ſeveral years. You have reaſon to bleſs God alſo that he did not run in vain, nor labour in vain. Bleſs the Lord for giving ſo many ſeals to his miniſtry, and for enabling him to live ſo honorably, and to die ſo triumphantly.

And now let each Individual examine himſelf, how far he profited by the miniſtrations of this dear ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt. If any of you put him out of his place, and idolized him; let ſuch learn wiſdom in future, and ſo account of us, as only the Stewards of the myſteries of God. If any undervalued him, let them ſincerely repent of that evil; and let all be concerned that the benefit of his miniſtry may not die with him. Remember the intereſting and important truths you profeſſed to receive from him. Remember the affectionate and earneſt exhortations addreſſed to you by him from this pulpit. Remember the conſiſtent and lovely example which he set before you; and the evidence of the truth of religion, and that diſplay of the faithfulneſs of God which was made by his ſupports under his painful and protracted affliction.

Conſider, beloved, your *duty to his Family*, and ſhew the ſincerity of your regard for your late dear paſtor by your tender ſympathy with his diſtreſſed Widow; and the ſubſtantial tokens of your affection to his *five* fatherleſs Children, whoſe tender years prevent them from forming any adequate conception of their unſpeakable loſs. May all the friends of the deceaſed bear them and their afflicted mother on their hearts before the Lord; remembering how eſſential a part of pure and undefiled religion it is, to pay kind attention to the orphan and the widow in their affliction; and accounting it an honour to imitate and ſubſerve that glorious Being, in whom the fatherleſs findeth mercy, and who encourages the deſolate widow to put her truſt in him.

My dear brethren, forget not your *duty to one another* alſo, in this ſeaſon of trial. While thus deprived of a paſtor, to take the overſight of you in the Lord, watch over each other the more carefully in love. Forſake not the aſſembling of yourſelves together; but ſtand faſt in the Lord. Strengthen the hands of your *deacons*, at a time when the concerns of the church lie the heavier upon them, inſtead of indulging, as ſometimes the caſe has been in other churches, a ſpirit of groundleſs jealouſy reſpecting thoſe whom you yourſelves have called to that office, and who have ſhewn a conſcientious and upright regard for your welfare.

In looking out for a miniſter, I truſt, you will be careful to ſeek one of the ſame ſtamp with my late dear brother; one who will guide you in the true narrow way, and guard you from error on the right-hand and on the left; who will warn you againſt every ſentiment which would diſhonour God's moral *government*, as well as faithfully oppoſe whatever notion would diſparage the riches of his glorious *grace*. May you chooſe a man equally zealous againſt ſelf righteouſneſs, and againſt ſelf indulgence; who will preach ſalvation by Chriſt alone, and inſiſt on deliverance from the power and love of ſin, as a moſt eſſential part of that ſalvation. May God direct you to a miniſter who ſhall anſwer to the deſcription given by Paul of himſelf and his fellow-labourers, "We preach Chriſt in you the hope of glory, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wiſdom; that we may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus." May he be able to appeal to you, on his death bed, in the words of the ſame Apoſtle, "As we were allowed of God to be put in truſt with the goſpel, ſo we ſpake, not as pleaſing men, but God, who trieth our hearts: not uſing flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetouſneſs, God is witneſs; nor ſeeking glory of men; but we were gentle among you, even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children; ſo being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the goſpel of God only, but alſo our own ſouls, becauſe ye were

dear unto us. Ye are witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably we behaved ourſelves among you who believe: as ye know, how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." Such a proteſtation, I am confident, your late beloved paſtor might have ſafely made; and I pray God, his ſucceſſor may be aſſiſted to imitate the ſame primitive example, and find a correſponding teſtimony in the conſcience of every unprejudiced hearer.

At the ſame time, let me exhort you, my brethren, to manifeſt *genuine chriſtian candor* in your choice of another miniſter, and in all your ſubſequent conduct towards him. If he ſhould not equal his predeceſſor in the popularity of his talents, the readineſs of his utterance, or in every amiable qualification of ſtill higher importance; yet if his heart be evidently devoted to God, do not deſpiſe him, nor undervalue him, but pray for him, encourage him, and ſtrengthen his hands in God. Make him not an offender for a word, nor for the want of a word. And do not magniſy ſuch infirmities as are common to the beſt of men in this ſtate of imperfection.

Endeavour, brethren, *to be unanimous* in your choice. Let none oppoſe the general voice, merely

to ſhew their conſequence, or aſſert their liberty. Nor let others reſolve upon having their own way, becauſe they have a ſmall majority of their mind: but endeavour to accommodate one another, as far as it is poſſible, without ſacrificing truth or prudence. Only be ſure that you ſeek a paſtor that is a holy man of God, a faithful ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, who will naturally care for your ſouls.

Finally, beloved, let all be careful to walk worthy of the Lord, in the practice of all that is well-pleaſing in his ſight. And let it appear that God by taking your late dear miniſter to himſelf, has drawn you nearer to heaven. Remember that Chriſt is now in the midſt of you, and that you hope ſoon to be with him in his kingdom, and to live and reign with him for ever. What manner of perſons ought you then to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs!

WHAT I have ſaid to the members of the *church* will, for the moſt part, apply to ſuch of the *ſtated* CONGREGATION, as are partakers of the grace of God.

But there are ſome who conſtantly attended my dear brother's miniſtry, who are left unconverted. O what ſhall I ſay to them! I earneſtly pray that they who heard him in vain while alive,

may hear him now he is dead, ſo as to be made alive themſelves. For being dead he yet ſpeaketh. The hiſtory which all his friends can give you of his life, and of his death, (his bleſſed death!) proclaims to you the truth and excellence of the goſpel. Do not you alſo remember that ſhort, but moſt affecting addreſs, which he made to you, the laſt time he aſcended this pulpit, after Brother Franklin of Coventry had been preaching? Then he told ſome, that his higheſt comfort, amidſt the ſymptoms of approaching diſſolution which he then exhibited, was the expectation of meeting them in heaven; while he forewarned others of you, that his greateſt anxiety aroſe from his fear of being obliged to witneſs againſt you, as deſpiſers and rejecters of the glorious Redeemer. O that the recollection of that dying warning, enforced by all his own happy experience in ſucceeding months of ſuffering and ſuperabounding conſolation, might convince you of the vaſt importance of true religion, of the unſpeakable worth of the goſpel of Chriſt, of the bleſſedneſs of being intereſted in his great ſalvation, and of obtaining an inheritance among them who are ſanctified through faith in him.

Many may expect, eſpecially thoſe who are *ſtrangers*, to hear a *character of the deceaſed;* but he choſe this text to avoid much being ſaid of himſelf, and though I ſhould not ſcruple intro-

ducing whatever might tend to honour divine grace, and to promote your edification, yet I am unable to enter into a particular biographical detail at this time. And as to his character, *thoſe* who knew him well need not my delineation of it, to make them remember it with high eſteem, to their dying day; while others might ſuſpect me of flattery, if I ſaid but the half of what I cordially believe. One thing I will ſay, which I could ſay of very few others, though I have known many of the excellent of the earth, That I never ſaw, or heard of any thing reſpecting him which grieved me, unleſs it was his inattention to his health, and that I believe was owing to a miſtaken idea of his conſtitution. If any of you know of other faults belonging to him, be careful to ſhun them; but O be ſure to follow him, wherein he was a follower of Chriſt.

While his outward conduct was remarkably blameleſs and exemplary, he evidently had a deep, abiding, humbling ſenſe of the evil of ſin, of his own native depravity, and remaining ſinfulneſs; of his abſolute need of Chriſt as an atoning ſacrifice, and the Lord his righteouſneſs; and of the love of the Spirit, and the importance of his work as a ſanctifier.—He lived a life of faith on the incarnate Son of God, as the bleſſed mediator, who had loved him, and given himſelf for

him; and as Chriſt was All in All to him, his joy and his gain, in life and in death, ſo he took great delight in preaching Chriſt to others, as the only and all-ſufficient Savior; he earneſtly longed, had it been permitted him by providence, to have preached Chriſt to the heathen, and would have been glad to have carried the tidings of ſalvation by his blood, to the ends of the earth.

But, inſtead of giving a fuller account in my own words, I will give all ſtrangers the means of forming a juſt idea of the Man, and of the nature of his religion, by reading ſome of his letters, written, three of them to myſelf, and two to the officers of this church, at different periods of his long illneſs; to which I ſhall add a few detached ſentences, uttered nearer the cloſe of his life, and taken down by his neareſt relative.

Theſe will tend more to your edification who know the Redeemer, and more to the conviction of thoſe who know him not, than any ſtudied panegyric.

May they excite all preſent to pray from the heart, Let me live the *life*, as well as die the *death* of the righteous; may the *commencement* of my profeſſion, and may my *latter end* be like his! Amen and Amen.

THE FOLLOWING

LETTERS and NARRATIVE

Were read before the concluding paragraph of the Sermon.

To Dr. RYLAND.

Birmingham, Dec. 9, 1798.
Lord's-Day Evening.

My dear dear Brother,

AFTER a ſabbath—ſuch a one I never knew before——ſpent in an entire ſeclusion from the houſe and ordinances of my God, I ſeek chriſtian converſe with you, in a way in which I am yet permitted to have intercourſe with my brethren. The day after I wrote to you laſt, my medical attendant laid me under the ſtricteſt injunctions not to ſpeak again in public for one month at leaſt. He ſays that my ſtomach is become ſo irritable, through repeated inflammations, that converſation unleſs managed with great caution would be dangerous;—that he does not think my preſent condition alarming, provided I take reſt, but without that, he intimated my life was in great danger. He forbids my expoſing myſelf to the evening air, on any account, and going out of doors, or to the door, unleſs when the air is dry and clear, ſo that I am, during the weather we now have in Birmingham, (very foggy) a complete priſoner; and the repeated cautions from my

dear and affectionate friends, whose solicitude, I conceive, far exceeds the danger, compels me to a rigid observance of the Doctor's rules.

This morning brother Pope took my place, and in the afternoon Mr. Brewer, who has discovered uncommon tenderness and respect for me and the people, since he knew my state, preached a very affectionate sermon from 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." By what I hear his sympathising observations, in relation to the event which occasioned his being then in my pulpit, drew more tears from the peoples eyes, than a dozen such poor creatures as their pastor could deserve. But I have.... blessed be God! long had the satisfaction of finding myself embosomed in friendship... the friendship of the people of my charge: though I lament that their love should occasion them a pang—— but thus it is——our heavenly Father sees that, for our mixed characters, a mixed state is best.

I anticipated a day of gloom, but I had unexpected reason to rejoice, that the shadow of death was turned into the joy of the morning; and though I said, with perhaps before unequalled feeling, "How amiable are thy tabernacles!" Yet I found the God of Zion does not neglect the dwellings of Jacob. My poor wife was much affected, at so novel a thing as leaving me behind

her, and ſo it was a dewy morning, but the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſoon aroſe, and ſhed ſuch ineffable delight throughout my ſoul, that I could ſay, 'It is good to be *here.*'—Motive to reſignation and gratitude alſo, crouded upon motive, till my judgment was convinced that I ought to rejoice in the Lord exceedingly, and ſo my whole ſoul took its fill of joy. May I if it be my Savior's will, feel as happy when I come to die! When my poor Sarah lay at the point of death, for ſome days after her firſt lying in, toward the latter days, I enjoyed ſuch ſupport, and felt my will ſo entirely bowed down to that of God, that I ſaid in my heart, 'I ſhall never fear another trial——he that ſuſtained me amidſt this flame, will defend me from every ſpark!' and this confidence I long enjoyed.——But that was near *ſix* years ago, and I had almoſt forgotten the land of the Hermonites, and the hill Mizar. But the Lord has prepared me to receive a freſh diſplay of his Fatherly care, and his, (ſhall I call it) punctilious veracity. If I ſhould be raiſed up again, I ſhall be able to preach on the Faithfulneſs of God more experimentally than ever. Perhaps ſome trial is coming on, and I am to be inſtrumental in preparing them for it: Or if not, if I am to depart hence to be no more ſeen, I know the Lord can carry on his work as well without me as with me. He who redeemed the ſheep with his blood will never ſuffer them to

periſh for want of ſhepherding, eſpecially ſince he himſelf is the chief Shepherd of ſouls. But my *Family!* Ah, *there* I find my faith but ſtill imperfect. However I do not think the Lord will ever take me away, till he helps me to leave my fatherleſs children in his hands, and truſt my widow alſo with him. "His love in times paſt," and I may add in times *preſent* too, "forbids me to think, he will leave me at *laſt*, in trouble to ſink."

Whilſt my weakneſs was gaining ground, I uſed to aſk myſelf how I could like to be laid by? I have dreamed that this was the caſe, and both awake and aſleep, I felt as though it were an evil that could not be borne:—but now, I find the Lord can fit the back to the burden, and though I think I love the thought of ſerving Chriſt at this moment better than ever, yet he has made me willing to be . . . . nothing, if he pleaſe to have it ſo; and now my happy heart, "could ſing itſelf away to everlaſting bliſs."

O what a mercy that I have not brought on my affliction by ſerving the *Devil.* What a mercy that I have ſo many dear ſympathizing friends! What a mercy that I have ſo much dear domeſtic comfort! What a mercy that I am in no violent bodily pain! What a mercy that I can read and write without doing myſelf an injury! What a mercy that my animal ſpirits have all the time

this has been coming on, (ever ſince the laſt Kettering Meeting of Miniſters) been vigorous—free from dejection! And which I reckon among the greateſt of this day's privileges, what a mercy that I have been able to employ myſelf for Chriſt and his dear cauſe to day, as I have been almoſt wholly occupied in the concerns of the (I hope) *reviving* church at Bromſgrove: and the infant church at Cradley! O my dear brother it is *all* mercy, is it not? O help me then in his praiſe, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ought I to apologize for this experimental chat with you who have concerns to tranſact of ſo much more importance than any that are confined to an individual? Forgive me if I have intruded too much on your time—but do not forget to praiſe on my behalf a faithful God. I ſhall now leave room againſt I have ſome buſineſs to write about—till then adieu—but let us not forget that *this God is our God for ever and ever*, and will be *our guide* even until death. Amen. Amen. We ſhall ſoon meet in Heaven.

S. P.

periſh for want of ſhepherding, eſpecially ſince he himſelf is the chief Shepherd of ſouls. But my *Family!* Ah, *there* I find my faith but ſtill imperfect. However I do not think the Lord will ever take me away, till he helps me to leave my fatherleſs children in his hands, and truſt my widow alſo with him. "His love in times paſt," and I may add in times *preſent* too, "forbids me to think, he will leave me at *laſt*, in trouble to ſink."

Whilſt my weakneſs was gaining ground, I uſed to aſk myſelf how I could like to be laid by? I have dreamed that this was the caſe, and both awake and aſleep, I felt as though it were an evil that could not be borne:—but now, I find the Lord can fit the back to the burden, and though I think I love the thought of ſerving Chriſt at this moment better than ever, yet he has made me willing to be . . . . nothing, if he pleaſe to have it ſo; and now my happy heart, "could ſing itſelf away to everlaſting bliſs."

O what a mercy that I have not brought on my affliction by ſerving the *Devil.* What a mercy that I have ſo many dear ſympathizing friends! What a mercy that I have ſo much dear domeſtic comfort! What a mercy that I am in no violent bodily pain! What a mercy that I can read and write without doing myſelf an injury! What a mercy that my animal ſpirits have all the time

this has been coming on, (ever ſince the laſt Kettering Meeting of Miniſters) been vigorous—free from dejection! And which I reckon among the greateſt of this day's privileges, what a mercy that I have been able to employ myſelf for Chriſt and his dear cauſe to day, as I have been almoſt wholly occupied in the concerns of the (I hope) *reviving* church at Bromſgrove: and the infant church at Cradley! O my dear brother it is *all* mercy, is it not? O help me then in his praiſe, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ought I to apologize for this experimental chat with you who have concerns to tranſact of ſo much more importance than any that are confined to an individual? Forgive me if I have intruded too much on your time—but do not forget to praiſe on my behalf a faithful God. I ſhall now leave room againſt I have ſome buſineſs to write about—till then adieu—but let us not forget that *this God is our God for ever and ever*, and will be *our guide* even until death. Amen. Amen. We ſhall ſoon meet in Heaven.

S. P.

To Mr. KING.

My dear friend and brother, *Plymouth, April* 23, 1799.

I Have the ſatisfaction to inform you that at length my complaint appears to be removed, and that I am by degrees returning to my uſual diet, by which with the divine bleſſing, I hope to be again ſtrengthened for the diſcharge of the duties, and the enjoyment of the pleaſures, which await me among the dear people of my charge.

I am indeed informed by my medical attendant here, that I ſhall never be equal to the labors of my paſt years, and that my return to moderate efforts muſt be made by ſlow degrees. As the path of duty I deſire to ſubmit; but after ſo long a ſuſpenſion from ſerving the Redeemer in his church, my ſoul pants for uſefulneſs more extenſive than ever, and I long to become an apoſtle to the world. I do not think I ever prized the miniſterial work ſo much as I now do. Two queſtions have been long before me. The firſt was, Shall I live or die? The ſecond, If I live, how will my life be ſpent? With regard to the former my heart anſwered, "It is no matter—all is well—for my own ſake, I need not be taught that it is beſt to be with Chriſt, but for the ſake of others, it may be beſt to abide in the body—I am in the Lord's hands, let him do by me as ſeemeth him beſt for me and mine, and for his cauſe and honor

in the world!—But as to the ſecond queſtion I could hardly reconcile myſelf to the thoughts of living, unleſs it were to promote the intereſt of my Lord; and if my diſorder ſhould ſo far weaken me, as to render me incapable of the miniſtry, nothing then appeared before me but gloom and darkneſs. However I will hope in the Lord, that though he hath chaſtened me ſorely, yet ſince he hath not given me over unto death, ſparing mercy will be followed with ſtrength, that I may ſhew forth his praiſe in the land of the living.

I am ſtill exceedingly weak; more ſo than at any period before I left home, except the firſt week of my lying by; but I am getting ſtrength, though ſlowly. It is impoſſible at preſent to fix any time for my return. It grieves me that the patience of the dear people ſhould be ſo long tried, but the trial is as great on my part as it can be on theirs, and we muſt pity and pray for one another. It is now a taſk for me to write at all, or this ſhould have been longer. S. P.

To Mr. POPE.

Plymouth, May 24, 1799.

——I Cannot write much—this I believe is the only letter I have written (except to my wife) ſince I wrote to you laſt. My complaint has iſſued in a confirmed, ſlow, nervous, fever, which has waſted my ſpirits and ſtrength, and

taken a great part of the little flesh I had when in health away from me. The symptoms have been very threatening, and I have repeatedly thought that let the physician do what he will, he cannot keep me long from those heavenly joys, for which, blessed be God, I have lately been much longing; and were it not for my *dear people* and *family*, I should have earnestly prayed for leave to depart, and be with Christ, which is so much better than to abide in this vain, suffering, sinning world.

The doctors however now pronounce my case very hopeful—say there is little or no danger—but that all these complaints require a *great deal of time* to get rid of. I still feel myself on precarious ground, but quite resigned to the will of *Him*, who, unworthy as I am, continues daily to "fill my soul with joy and peace in believing." Yes, my dear friend! *now* my soul feels the value of a free full and everlasting salvation, and what is more I do *enjoy* that salvation, while I rest all my hope on the Son of God in human nature, dying on the cross for me. To me now health or sickness, pain or ease, life or death are things indifferent. I feel so happy in being in the hands of infinite love, that when the severest strokes are laid upon me, I receive them with pleasure, because they come from my heavenly Father's hands! "O! to grace how great a Debtor, &c."

S. P.

To Dr. RYLAND.

My very dear brother, *Birmingham, July* 20, 1799.

YOUR friendly anxieties on my behalf demand the earlieſt ſatisfaction. We had a pleaſant ride to Newport on the afternoon we left you, and the next day without much fatigue reached Tewkſbury; but the road was ſo rough from Tewkſbury to Eveſham, that it wearied and injured me more than all the jolting we had had before put together. However we reached Alceſter on Wedneſday evening, ſtopped there a day to reſt, and laſt night (Friday) were brought ſafely hither, bleſſed be God!

I find myſelf getting weaker and weaker, and ſo my Lord inſtructs me in his pleaſure to remove me ſoon. You ſay well, my dear brother, that at ſuch a proſpect, I "cannot complain." No, bleſſed be His dear name, who ſhed his blood for me, he helps me to rejoice at times with joy unſpeakable. Now I ſee the value of the religion of the croſs. It is a religion for a dying ſinner. It is all the moſt guilty, the moſt wretched can deſire. Yes I taſte its ſweetneſs and enjoy its fulneſs with all the gloom of a dying bed before me. And far rather would I be the poor emaciated and emaciating creature that I am, than be an Emperor, with every earthly good about him—but without a God!

I was delighted the other day, in re-perusing the Pilgrim's Progress, to observe that when *Christian* came to the top of the hill *Difficulty*, he was put to sleep in a chamber called *Peace*. 'Why how good is the Lord of the way to me!' said I, I have not reached the summit of the hill yet, but notwithstanding he puts me to sleep in the chamber of Peace *every night* . . . . True, it is often a chamber of *pain;* but let pain be as formidable as it may, it has never yet been able to expel that peace, which the great guardian of Israel has appointed to keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

I have been laboring lately to exercise most love to God when I have been suffering most severely:—but, what shall I say, Alas! too often the sense of pain absorbs every other thought. Yet there have been seasons when I have been affected with such a delightful sense of the loveliness of God as to ravish my soul and give predominance to the sacred passion.—It was never till to day that I got any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by *what death* he should glorify God. O what a satisfying thought it is that God appoints those means of dissolution whereby he gets most glory to himself. It was the very thing I needed; for of all the ways of dying, that which I most dreaded was by a consumption; (in which it is now highly probable my disorder will

iſſue.) But, O my dear Lord, *if* by *this death* I can moſt *glorify thee*, I prefer it to all others, and thank thee that by this mean thou art haſtening my fuller enjoyment of thee in a purer world.

A *ſinleſs* ſtate! "O tis a heaven worth dying for!" I cannot realize any thing about heaven, but the preſence of Chriſt and his people, and a perfect deliverance from ſin—and I want no more—I am ſick of ſinning—ſoon I ſhall be beyond its power. "O joyful hour! O bleſt abode! I ſhall be near and *like* my God!"

I only thought of filling one ſide—and now have not left room to thank you and dear Mrs. Ryland for the minute, affectionate and conſtant attentions you paid us in Briſtol. May the Lord reward you. Our hearty love to all around, till we meet in heaven.

Eternally yours in Chriſt,

S. P.

Birmingham, Aug. 4, 1799.

My very dear Brother, *Lord's-Day Evening.*

STILL I truſt haſtening to the land "where there ſhall be no more curſe," I take this opportunity of talking a little with you on the road, for we are fellow-travellers, and a little converſation by the way will not loſe me the privilege of getting firſt to the end of my journey.

It is ſeventeen years within about a week ſince I firſt actually ſet out on my pilgrimage, and when I review the many dangers to which, during that time I have been expoſed, I am filled with conviction that I have all along been the care of omnipotent love. Ah how many Pliables, and Timorouſes, and Talkatives have I ſeen, while my quivering heart ſaid, "Alas! I ſhall ſoon follow theſe Sons of Apoſtaſy, prove a diſgrace to Religion, and have my portion with hypocrites at laſt."

Theſe fears may have had their uſes—may have made me more cautious, more diſtruſtful of myſelf, and kept me more dependant on the Lord. Thus

"All that I've met has work'd for my good."

With what intricacy, to our view, and yet with what actual ſkill and goodneſs, does the Lord draw his plans, and mark out our path! Here we wonder and complain—Soon we ſhall all agree that it was a right path to the city of habitation; and what we now moſt deeply regret ſhall become the ſubject of our warmeſt praiſes.

I am afraid to come back again to life. O how many dangers await me! Perhaps I may be overcome of ſome fleſhly luſt—perhaps I may get

proud and indolent, and be more of the prieſt than of the evangeliſt—ſurely I rejoice in feeling my outward man decay, and having the ſentence of death in myſelf. O what proſpects are before me in the bleſſed world whither I am going! To be *holy* as *God is holy*—to have nothing but holineſs in my nature—to be aſſured, without a doubt, and eternally to carry about this aſſurance with me, that the pure God looks on me with conſtant complacency, for ever bleſſes me, and ſays, as at the firſt creation, "It is very good." I am happy now in hoping in the divine purpoſes towards me; but I know, and the thought is my conſtant burden, that the Being I love beſt, always ſees ſomething in me which he *infinitely hates.* "O wretched, wretched man that I am!" The thought even now makes me weep, and who can help it? that ſeriouſly reflects, he never comes to God to pray or praiſe, but he brings what his God deteſts along with him—carries it with him wherever he goes, and can never get rid of it as long as he lives! Come, my dear brother! will you not ſhare my joy, and help my praiſe, that ſoon I ſhall leave this body of ſin and death behind, to enter on the perfection of my ſpiritual nature; and patiently to wait till this natural body ſhall become a ſpiritual body, and ſo be a fit vehicle for my immortal and happy ſpirit!

But I muſt forbear—I have been very unwell all day; but this evening God has kindly given

me a reſpite—my fever is low and my ſpirits are cheerful, ſo I have indulged myſelf in unboſoming my feelings to my dear friend.

S. P.

MEMORANDA;

Taken down occaſionally by Mrs. PEARCE, *within four or five weeks of Mr.* PEARCE'S *death.*

HE once ſaid, "I have been in darkneſs two or three days, crying O when wilt thou comfort me! but laſt night the miſt was taken from me, and the Lord ſhone in upon my Soul. O that I could but ſpeak, I would tell a world to truſt a faithful God. Sweet affliction, now it worketh Glory Glory!"

Mrs. P. having told him the various exerciſes of her mind, he replied "O truſt the Lord, if he lifts up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become molehills. I feel your ſituation, I feel your ſorrows, but he who takes care of ſparrows, will care for you, and my dear children."

When ſcorching with burning fever, he ſaid, "Hot and happy."—One Lord's-day morning he ſaid, "Chear up, my dear, think how much will

be ſaid to day of the faithfulneſs of God. Though *we* are called to ſeparate, *he* will never ſeparate from you. I wiſh I could tell the world what a good and gracious God he is. Never need they who truſt in him be afraid of trials. He has promiſed to give ſtrength for the day; that is his promiſe. O what a lovely God; and he is *my* God and *yours*. He will never leave us nor forſake us, no, never! I have been thinking that this and that medicine will do me good, but what have I to do with it? It is in my Jeſus's hands; he will do it all, and there I leave it. What a mercy is it, I have a good bed to lie upon; you my dear Sarah to wait upon me; and friends to pray for me. O how thankful ſhould I be for all my pains; I want for nothing: all my wiſhes are anticipated. O I have felt the force of thoſe words of David, "Unleſs thy law," (my gracious God!) "had been my delights, I ſhould have periſhed in mine affliction." Though I am too weak to read it, or hear it, I can think upon it, and O how good it is! I am in the beſt hands I could be in, in the hands of my dear Lord and Savior, and he will do all things well. Yes, Yes, he cannot do wrong."

One morning Mrs. P. aſked him, how he felt?— "Very ill, but unſpeakably happy in the Lord, and *my* dear *Lord Jeſus*." Once beholding

her grieving, he ſaid, "O my dear Sarah, do not be ſo anxious, but leave me entirely in the hands of Jeſus, and think, if you were as wiſe as he, you would do the ſame by me. If he takes me, I ſhall not be loſt, I ſhall only go a little before, we ſhall meet again never to part."

After a violent fit of coughing he ſaid, "It is all well, O what a good God is he! It is done by him, and it muſt be well—If I ever recover I ſhall pity the ſick more than ever, and if I do not, I ſhall go to ſing delivering love, ſo you ſee it will be all well.—O for more patience! well my God is the God of patience, and he will give me all I need. I rejoice it is in my Jeſus's hands to communicate, and it cannot be in better. It is my God who gives me patience to bear all his will."

When after a reſtleſs night, Mrs. P. aſked him, what ſhe ſhould do for him? "You can do nothing, but pray for me, that I may have patience to bear all my Lord's will."—After taking a medicine he ſaid, "If it be the Lord's will to bleſs it, for your ſake, and for the ſake of the dear Children, but the Lord's will be done. O I fear I ſin, I diſhonor God by impatience; but I would not for a thouſand worlds ſin in a thought if I could avoid it." Mrs. P. replied, ſhe truſted the Lord would ſtill keep him; ſeeing

he had brought him thus far, he would not desert him at last. "No, no," he said, "I hope he will not. As a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Why do I complain? My dear Jesus's sufferings were much sorer and more bitter than mine; *And did he thus suffer, and shall I repine!* No I will cheerfully suffer my Father's will."

One morning after being asked how he felt, he replied, "I have but one severe pain about me! what a mercy! O how good a God to afford some intervals amidst so much pain! He is altogether good; Jesus lives, my dear, and that must be our consolation."—After taking a medicine which operated very powerfully, he said, "This will make me so much lower; well let it be. Multiply my pains thou good God, so thou art but glorified, I care not what I suffer, all is right."

Being asked how he felt after a restless night, he replied, "I have so much weakness and pain, I have not had much enjoyment, but I have a full persuasion that the Lord is doing all things well. If it were not for strong confidence in a lovely God, I must sink; but all is well. O blessed God, I would not love thee less; O support a sinking worm! O what a mercy to be assured that all things are working together for good."

Mrs. P. ſaying, If we muſt part, I truſt the ſeparation will not be for ever. "O no," he replied, "we ſorrow not as thoſe who have no hope." She ſaid, Then you can leave me and your dear children with reſignation, can you? He anſwered, "My heart was pierced through with many ſorrows, before I could give you and the dear children up; but the Lord has heard me ſay, Thy will be done, and I now can ſay, bleſſed be his dear name, I have none of my own."

His laſt day, October 10th was very happy; Mrs. P. repeated this verſe,

Since all that I meet shall work for my good,
The bitter is sweet, the Med'cine is food;
Though painful at present 'twill cease before long,
And then O how pleasant, the conqueror's song.

He repeated, with an inexpreſſible ſmile, the laſt line, "*The Conqueror's ſong.*"

He ſaid once, "O my dear! What ſhall I do? but why do I complain; he makes all my bed in my ſickneſs." She then repeated thoſe lines,

Jesus can make a dying bed,
Feel soft as downy pillows are.

"Yes," he replied, "he can, he does, I feel it."

FINIS.

Printed by J. W. Morris, Clipstone, Northamptonshire.